

2016 Eckhart Tolle - Enlightened Relationships The Ultimate Training Ground for Practicing Presence

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:51:56)

This is Audible. Welcome. I was sitting in the green room 10 minutes ago, and was lucky enough to pick up a leaflet that was left there that told me that I'm speaking about enlightened relationships tonight.

And the arising of the new consciousness. The arising of the new consciousness is, of course, why we are here. And this could be misunderstood.

We are not here because we want a new consciousness to arise. When is it going to arise? We are here because it is arising.

And you wouldn't have come here if it were not arising in you, if you came voluntarily. And even if you came voluntarily, which I hope 99% at least of you did, even if you came voluntarily, not dragged here by your husband, wife, partner, friend, even there, it is possible that the arising new consciousness, which drew you here, which enabled you to recognize the truth, for example, in *The Power of Now*, *A New Earth*, or any other spiritual book that was written from and out of the awakened consciousness, yes, you recognized that because it's only the awakening consciousness in you that can recognize the truth when it's spoken that points to awakening. Otherwise, if somebody talks about awakening, it's no more than a mental concept, maybe interesting for a few minutes, and then you would quickly lose interest because it's not that interesting to the mind.

So even though the new consciousness is arising in many of you, it does not mean that it is continuously there yet. Many experience shifts between almost two dimensions, the mind-obsessed or the mind-possessed state, the thought-obsessed, mind-possessed state, which is the normal state of consciousness on the planet, has been for thousands of years, and the liberated or awakened state of simple, alert, spacious presence. And as you sit here, you may actually, or some of you, may experience moments when you're fully here, and then you may experience your mind taking you over, and you start thinking about what's going to happen tomorrow, or you start thinking about your problems, which are of course not here now, which have no reality at this moment, but the mind loves to dwell on those things because it keeps it going, it gives it renewed energy. And then perhaps, suddenly you wake up again, and you're back here in the room, and you're alert again. Or your mind may come in and tell you that it's better to go home now because you can't stand listening to this anymore.

And at that moment you have, well, at that moment, depending on whether there is some awareness that this is your mind talking to you, is there, that determines whether you have a choice. If you're totally identified with that thought, you will get up and go home. If you know that there's a thought arising that says something, then you can be

there as the awareness behind the thought, and realize you don't necessarily have to do what the thought says, or even believe in it when the thought says, what the hell is it talking about?

I don't understand it. Because you can't really understand it from the conceptual mind. So let's see what your mind does.

Just be there as the witness of your mind, if you can. And as Tammy pointed out at the beginning, we have, I don't know if she pointed out, we have the words that you listen to, and we have an energy field out of which the words come. And the energy field out of which the words come, we could call presence or the awakened consciousness.

And there's nothing personal in it. It's not mine. It's here because the me got out of the way.

I have not achieved it. I don't possess it. So that is the energy field, and that operates here also.

And the same energy field in you may respond to that. And then we have here, to some extent it's arising already, a collective energy field of presence arising. That is very helpful to spend some time, which conventional language, it's only always the present moment, in this energy field, the collective energy field of presence.

So there are the words, they may be helpful pointers, but the most important thing is that which underlies the words. The arising new consciousness, often people have asked me and are asking me, how do you know that there is a new consciousness arising? Don't you, well, well, I must admit, there were times the last few years when I found it a bit difficult, when I was looking at world events, to answer that.

Because I knew the new consciousness is arising, but it is not it or it was not yet so visible in the outer manifestations, where the old consciousness was still operating. Now in the recent past, we had several events that are indications that the new consciousness is just beginning to reach the manifested structures of our civilization. We know that because some of the structures are beginning to dissolve.

And of course, if you believe too much in the media, you will think this is a dreadful thing. What's going to happen? You should be fearful, the media tells you, it's going to get worse and worse.

And of course, yes, it may be challenging for many people, huge shifts happening. The old structures that were created a long time ago by the old consciousness, dissolving. As I mentioned in the New Earth, it happened to communism.

Within a few years, two or three years, this rigid system one would have thought would never dissolve, at least not for a thousand years, gone. Of course, it was very

challenging, and they followed times of upheavals in Russia. And in East Germany, I remember reading, many, many, many people needed urgent psychotherapeutic treatment, because their worldview that had been indoctrinated into them had collapsed.

It doesn't make sense anymore. And many of the structures nowadays that we believed in, the huge banks, massive power and money, suddenly they're not that stable. They're not as solid as they looked.

The buildings looked so solid. Huge structures. And the people who were running these organizations, they looked so confident.

And for many years, I was saying sometimes to groups, this is a very meaningful gathering tonight, as is this one. And I also sometimes added, but it's not going to be on the news tonight, because the media isn't interested in that. That was true until very recently.

And a good news is the good news and what is usually the bad news. It is on the news. Last night, ABC filmed part of our talk.

ABC News. It's unbelievable. It's an undreamt of a miracle.

How is that possible? And CBC News came to interview me. It can't be.

So it's, yes, there are signs that a shift is happening. Another hopeful sign is where there's a new man in the White House who, relative to some other world leaders or his predecessor, can be considered, if not a Buddha, at least a bodhisattva. And of course, the change is not going to come from one person.

He's not going to change the world. He is a manifestation of the change that is happening. Yes, he hopefully will be part of that change.

Yes, he will make mistakes, of course. But these are signs that these things could not have happened even 20, 30 years ago. The arising new consciousness.

What are the signs of the arising new consciousness? A lessening of, on the inner level, a lessening of mind possession, the normal state. Thinking no longer dominates your state of consciousness.

Thinking no longer gives you your sense of identity. You no longer derive your sense of who you are from what your mind tells you about you. The story of me and my life.

And you don't impose mental labels on others. There's a, not immediately, perhaps a complete absence, but there is a lessening of this compulsive conceptualizing, labeling, interpreting of the reality around you and yourself. Thought still operates, but your sense of who you are, of identity, does no longer, no longer comes from the movement of thought.

To experience that is one reason to experience more fully. That's why we are here. Who am I?

The mind will tell you who you are. I am this, this, my past, my history, my problems, my position in the world, whatever I identify with becomes part of my sense of self. And as presence arises, who you are deepens.

You suddenly realize there's a depth in that still alert space between thoughts that is here now. Very simple. A still alert space between thoughts.

And that alert space is just, if we want to call it anything, consciousness itself. And increasingly, that is where your sense of identity comes from. Not from some story that you tell yourself about who you are.

Now you will notice that in that clear space, you're not defining yourself anymore. In that clear space, we could even say, and this is frightening to the mind, you no longer know who you are in the sense of conceptual knowledge. And that is frightening to the mind.

But it is a beautiful state where you realize the essence of I, that until then had been mixed up always with thought forms. Now you go to the essence, the pure essence of I, no longer mixed up with, first you thought of I am this, I am that. And now you realize the simplicity of I am.

No definitions are needed. And you are, this is why I say, you are never more truly yourself than when you are still inside. You haven't gone to sleep.

You have not fallen below thought. You have risen above thought. You have transcended thought.

You have not returned to the realm of plants that are also very still. You haven't returned to that. You have gone through thinking.

You have transcended thinking. And then thinking becomes a helpful tool and a beautiful tool that the arising consciousness can actually use as it's doing at this very moment. It's using this little mind to express something that can't really be expressed in words.

And yet the mind is somehow managing to express that which is beyond definitions. So you find that space inside yourself. It's there.

And your personal history becomes, as far as your sense of self is concerned, your sense of who you are, is no longer important. One could almost say your personal history, as far as your sense of who you are is concerned, becomes irrelevant. What a liberation.

What a liberation not to carry around and mistaking the story in your mind, the story of me, the unhappy one. If it's happy, just wait a little and you'll turn unhappy. The story of me and my problems and my sufferings and my complaints about the world and other

people and what they did to me and what I did to them and what shouldn't have happened but did happen.

All the continuous stream is no longer giving you your sense of illusory identity. But from the point of view of the conceptualizing mind, you have entered a very dangerous place. Ooh, don't go.

You don't know who you are anymore. Who am I? I have to remember my past quickly.

Oh yes, I remember now my childhood was very unhappy. Of course, people have suffered in the past. Some of you suffered more than I.

My suffering was moderate as a child, just mostly I was unhappy, but it could have been worse. And then it became more acute in early adulthood, but that also could have been worse probably, and some of you probably had worse sufferings than me. And if while I speak now you detect in yourself a slight irritation or anger because I am not acknowledging enough what you have suffered in the past, then that is helpful to know what is that that irritation or even slight anger that I'm not acknowledging your suffering.

Oh, there must have been some identification with my suffering. I'm not saying your suffering was not dreadful, but do you want that to be your sense of, form the basis for your sense of identity for the rest of your life? Or even if you have an illness, the illness is there, but the conceptual thing of saying, I am a sufferer of whatever it is, that also can be very seductive and in some cases becomes the main, the foundation for your sense of self.

And that's, it's, and once this has happened, you don't want to let go because there is a fear that when you let go of that sense of self, the unhappy sense of self, that perhaps blames, if you can blame somebody it's even better, blame people and you hang on and that comes a huge chunk in your mental, emotional structure. Okay, that's me. That's what happened to me.

That's why that, what they did to me. Yes, of course they did, but you are much deeper than that. There's a depth to who you are and at that level of depth and you begin to touch it in the space between two thoughts, where there's simple presence, that was never touched by your suffering.

Now that you may not have been aware of that because you were not conscious, there is a place in you that was never and can never be touched by suffering. And that is the pure I, the pure consciousness. So yes, of course you remember your story still, but your sense of identity is taken out of that.

And then you will be able to tell your story without the heaviness of a sense of self in it anymore. I sometimes talk about being a very unhappy child, but I don't feel the unhappiness still operating in me. I remember it, but I could, I no longer say, I was

dreadful as a child, what my parents did.

My parents acted according, they did what they could do according to their level of consciousness. What they did reflected their level of awareness, their level of consciousness. And beyond that, there's the beautiful being underneath it.

So, the story, the past, the future also, not only does the past become less important, the future also loses its importance because in the egoic state of consciousness, which is the unhappy story of me, the mind forms with which you are identified, the future is extremely important because the unhappy me hopes to reach a state of freedom from unhappiness or fulfillment and satisfaction when this, that, or the other happens at some point in the future.

It looks to the future for fulfillment, release, completion. The always incomplete story of me, the always unsatisfying story of me, it didn't go the way it should have gone. It didn't go the way it should have gone.

But there's still the possibility that the story will complete itself in the future and finally I will arrive at some point of fulfillment. The only problem is the future doesn't exist, except as a thought. When it comes, it's the present, which I have, and if I habitually run away from the present, deny it, and look elsewhere, then I'm condemned to continuous dissatisfaction.

So, accessing the space or the stillness within now. You don't know anymore. It's a state of, from the point of view of the mind, you need to become comfortable, which from the point of view of the mind is a state of ignorance.

The absence of interpretation or definition. Not knowing. That's the place where the, for example, I embrace that when I come on to give a talk.

The becoming comfortable with not knowing what words are going to come out. Entering the space where, now what is that space that we are now pointing towards within? Entering that space of seemingly, seeming ignorance, where you don't, it's a place of no thought, but alertness.

Out, that is the place out of which all aliveness, all creativity, anything that is ever new, is born. It is not only emptiness, as it is called in Buddhism, it is also fullness, potential fullness. It is pure intelligence.

It is pure consciousness. It is the source of all life. The formless source of all life.

And where do you find it? At the center of your being. And at the center of your being, you actually find the center of the universe.

Because you're a microcosm. I mentioned last night these, the black holes at the center

of galaxies, which I had written about, but was never published. And now I'm reading that scientists are saying, yes, there probably is a black hole at the center of each galaxy.

And they're almost certain there's a black hole at the center of our galaxy. There's an empty space, there is the empty fullness, the plenum void, as it's sometimes called by some mystics, the empty fullness at the center and the core of your being. Find that, and you have found the core of all, the source of all life.

Find that, and you have found yourself, the essence of who you are. Find that, and you have found the timeless dimension of pure consciousness, that which underlies all life. You have found the life.

Being is another word for it. Being before it becomes something. Being before it becomes existence.

Existence means to stand out. Being is the inner dimension, the uttermost innerness. Find that, and you have found what all humans have been and are actually looking for.

And most humans are looking for it where it cannot be found. In the phenomenal world, in mind forms, in the future. That is, we can call that stillness, we can call it space, I sometimes call it the inner space, you can call it consciousness, being, or you can call it sat-citta-nanda, which is the Indian term meaning, consisting of three words, being, consciousness, bliss.

Bliss means it feels, it is blissful to be connected with that, or to realize that as the essence of your being. And all that's needed is temporary cessation of thought. And once you have that, and you, then the spaces between thought become longer, and you can go about doing and experiencing life, at first tentatively, tentatively you may experience going towards the door across the room in the state of a large spacious presence.

And every step is, you'll find you're present with every step, and I'm not saying I'm going to do a walking meditation now, but it's a more natural thing, you may find yourself opening a door, and not making it into means to an end, while you're in the elevator, you're pressing a button, and you're going down in, you're just alert, a field of alertness in the elevator, not a person. And then when you need to use your mind, it'll, of course, if you're in that state, and somebody asks you a question, and immediately an answer comes out of you, I'm, let's say it's a question that is somewhat deeper than where is such and such a street, some other question, somebody asks you a question, and the question is received in the state of simple open presence. And there's a moment of a little gap, time gap, and then you will find a meaningful, powerful answer comes out of you.

And often you may find you didn't know that until it came, because it comes out of that,

out of presence. This is how I began to be a spiritual teacher. I didn't know I was a spiritual teacher.

I was already, I was answering questions. People casually came, and said, asked some questions about life, or their problems, and I was just listening. I didn't know anything.

I had hardly understood what had happened to me. I'd hardly understood that state that is free of thought, and peaceful, and alive, and present. There was just listening to the question, and then I said something.

The answer came out, oh, that's interesting. And then the person said, wow, you are very wise. Well, I didn't know that I knew that, so I, and then they told a friend about it, and then the friend came and said, wow.

And then somebody came and said, oh, you, I wanted to talk to you, because I'm told, I was told you're a spiritual teacher. Oh, is that what I am? But this operates on all levels.

You just, if action is required in a certain situation, if you can become still for one moment, and then right action happens. Buddhists talk about all this kind of thing, I can never memorize these. Right action, right this, right that, right speech, right action, all these things come out of that state of consciousness by themselves.

And your thinking changes. The obsessive thinking, especially obsessed with negative thinking and so on, subsides slowly. Yes, you will still be overtaken by waves of thought occasionally, that's okay, and then you wake up again out of the wave of thought.

And the great test for the arising of the new consciousness, of course, comes in relationships, and which are also a great challenge. Relationships will reflect back to you your predominant state of consciousness. And that's why they are so useful.

And so if you are a hermit, then it's very easy to fool yourself as to your state of consciousness. If you avoid contact with other humans because it's just, you just don't want to know anymore, it's just too unsettling, then of course, yes, you can probably be in sustained states of, if you're lucky enough, somebody brings you food, you don't, you can be in sustained states of presence and believe that you have finally arrived, but it will not yet be deeply rooted within you because it has not been tested in the fire of relationships.

As a monk, I knew years ago, a Buddhist monk was telling me that he was in the east somewhere and he was a westerner, but he had become a Buddhist monk. And his teacher, the abbot of the monastery where he was, allowed him to go up a mountain and sit in a little hut for half a year. And somebody would bring him food every day, and he had nothing to do but meditate and sit.

And after a few, the first month was dreadful, unbearable, because he was sitting there

with his mind. Torturing him on the inner and the mosquitoes torturing him on the outer level. And then gradually he was able to let go of that and become more and more presence was arising.

And he then said, and then in the last month or so, presence was almost continuous and he was convinced that he had reached the state of liberation. And then a message came from the monastery, which somebody had realized that your visa has expired. And so he had to travel to the big city and stand in line at the consulate or whatever it was.

And it took hours. And then he was in the wrong line and said, I've just been standing here for two hours. No, this is the wrong lineup.

You have to go to that one. And that was the wrong one too. And when he finally got to the official, he was hitting his table, I've been here for five hours.

And then he suddenly became aware. And he realized all that beautiful presence was gone. That's relationships.

And that was an easy relationship, just an official relationships. Now there are many kinds of relationships. We will talk about that.

But the essence of relationships, the question is always whether relationships are working harmoniously and beautifully, or whether they are conflict ridden, is determined by whether there is space in your relationship. And that applies to any relationship. The question is, is there space in this?

What does space mean? I don't mean space in the sense of distance between people. That's another aspect.

I mean inner space. There is a line in Khalil Gibran's Prophet, which talks about space, but this is not what I mean. This is also true, by the way.

He says, let there be spaces in your relationship, which means don't be clinging to each other all the time. Occasionally go your own way and then come back together. That's also true.

But what I'm talking about here is inner space in the relationship. And what that is, you probably know already, and we will come to that now as we address the different kinds of relationships that you encounter in life, and see how the arising new consciousness can be sustained in those challenging situations. Because there is no doubt that human beings are very challenging.

The others are the human beings. So you have, of course, the first thing that comes to mind when you talk about relationships is the intimate relationships, which usually start off as romantic and then become something else. This is what usually comes to mind,

what many films are still about, movies that you see, a large part are still about that.

And it is what many people's lives are preoccupied with, is what people look to for their sense of fulfillment and happiness, and at the same time, those intimate relationships are one of the greatest sources of unhappiness. So a little contradiction here, of course, people look to it for their fulfillment and happiness, and in many, many cases, the opposite happens. And in many, many cases, the people experience a shift from the very person that was going to, was supposed to make me happy, now makes me unhappy.

That's the normal course of relationships. I read the other day, I don't know who said it, and he said there is no marriage in which a week after the wedding, there is no marriage in which one week after the wedding, you cannot find grounds for divorce. And the secret is in continuing to find grounds for marriage, he said.

Before we, let's put this aside, because that is the most problematic. But you are engaged, we will come to that, of course, but you are engaged throughout the day and throughout your life in many kinds of relationship, different types of relationship, you have relationships with your children, if you have children, you have relationships with your grown-up children, you have relationships with your parents, relationships with siblings, family members, relatives, you have relationships with friends, you have relationships, casual, brief relationships when you interact with people to do this or that, to buy something, to ask for information, on the telephone. These are all relationships, and they're all part of, if there is dysfunction in you, egoic dysfunction, that will manifest in all relationships.

Let's start with the simplest relationships, and that is where you don't know the people very well. Makes it a little easier, perhaps. Somebody, you go to a shop and you buy something, you are asking somebody for information, you're getting a ticket behind a counter, there's somebody giving you a ticket.

Now, all these, the supermarket, the cashier, all these things at the hotel, the porter, the bellboy, whatever, whoever it is, the waiter, the waitress, these are all people that continuously come into your life, usually is not given much attention, because those kinds of relationships and the people who represent, are part of those relationships, are usually considered a means to an end. Because, of course, you're only interacting with this person because you want to buy the newspaper, whatever it is, from this person. So the person becomes a means to an end.

Or you're asking for information, and the person is a means to an end. What you want is not the relationship, you want the information from that person, you want that person to do something for you. Yes, of course, on a functional level that is true, but it is also true that you are reducing a brief interaction between two human beings to something that is actually dehumanized.

When you interact with humans in that way, where you make another human being into a means to an end, and of course, the ego does not only do that in these brief functional relationships, the ego does the same thing with other more closer relationships would come to that. But you observe it to see what is the quality of your relationship, the casual relationships that happen throughout the day, that are brief encounters with other human beings. So there comes the first opportunity to bring in a little bit of space, so that you then have two dimensions to that relationship.

Let's say you are buying something. You're buying a book. You go to the bookstore, you buy a spiritual book.

You hand the book to the cashier, and now we have the beginning of a relationship. Now, and of course, the cashier, of course, has also a relationship with you, but what the cashier does is not your concern. Whether the cashier is treating you as a mental concept called customer is not your concern.

Whether the cashier sees you as a human being or sees the being behind the human is not your concern. Your concern is your state of consciousness. Your, is there some space while you interact?

Yes, you need this person because this person is going to take your money and give you the receipt. No question about that. Is that all there is?

Or have you missed a valuable opportunity for relating and connecting to another human being? And how do you do that? You do that by looking at that human being and not thinking anything while you look, in, have space inside you while you look, hand over your money, and take the book, and say, thank you.

During that interaction, there was a moment of stillness inside you, alert stillness. Let's do it again. He says, he or she says, okay, that'll be \$16, or usually books cost like \$15.99. Okay. You take the money out and you look. Very simple. Not that you want something, not like you say, I want something deeply meaningful with you.

But it, there is a human being there and you are a human being. Is there a, is there a meeting? Is it what in the Course in Miracles is described?

Is it a holy encounter? It says that potentially whenever you meet somebody, no matter how briefly, it can be a holy encounter. That means that which transcends the person, that which transcends the temporary function, that which transcends the label, customer, employee, shop assistant, that which transcends those things suddenly comes into being, emerges.

And it emerges because you were there as primarily as space rather than as a function or as a label, a concept. Now it is quite possible that you will get no response at all from the person serving you because it is possible that the person serving you is totally

identified with the concept that you are a customer. You're not a human being.

You are a customer and you are treated as a customer. Okay. Thank you.

He may not even look at you. And of course you're not saying, please look at me. It's, it's a self-sufficient thing.

It's, you don't expect anything from him or her. You do it for yourself. But if you do that, you're offering space, one could say.

You're offering that person space, but they don't have to take it. You're offering a spacious, brief, spacious relationship. But the miracle is that often you will find, if they are not totally identified with their mind structures, a little opening in them.

And they look at you. And for a moment you connect as on the level of consciousness beyond the function, beyond the labels. And that is a bit, it adds a quality to your life.

If you just do that in ordinary, brief relationships already adds a depth that before wasn't there. And it can be a beautiful, I've had, I have many beautiful encounters with people that I meet very briefly and there is a, suddenly there is a depth to it that would have been completely missing if I had reduced the human being to a function, which is what the mind does. The mind has a label and it, and the mind makes, if you're only in the mind, everything is a means to an end, including human beings.

This is what the egoic mind does. It transforms the present moment, whether the, whether a human being comes into the present moment, or whether some action that you do in the present moment, whatever it is in the present moment, the ego transmutes it into a means to an end. It looks to the, it wants to get there and it uses this to get there.

So it's, the ego uses the present moment and people in the present moment, because the only place where you can meet people in the present moment. I've never met anybody not in the present moment. So if the egoic consciousness reduces other humans to a means, to reduces the present moment to a means to an end, it reduces anything and everything that comes into the space of now to a means to an end.

Dreadful way to live. And then you can see when, when that operates, human interactions become quite unpleasant. Dehumanized, desacralized, you could say.

So this is a beautiful practice. And if the other person shows no response, it's fine. You have, there was a space of presence in you.

So you're, you're the giver of space. And so you begin in all those, and sometimes you'll forget. Don't beat yourself up if you forget.

After paying at the supermarket, you realized you weren't, there was no awareness that

there was another human being there, because mentally you were already in the car. Because when you're stuck in your mind mentally, you're always one, two, three, or four steps ahead. You're never here.

You're just here enough so that you don't bump into things. And so that is, well, I would say perhaps the easiest, as far as relationships are concerned, that's the easiest practice. And even that some people don't find easy to remember, to actually be present when you are there with another human being.

But then, of course, you don't have to spend a long time with them, so it makes it easier. Then you have relationships where you meet people at work, family members, friends. Now, many people real notice, for example, some friendships survive because you don't get together too often.

The longest lasting friendships are people who live a long way away, and you perhaps see them every two years, and you email occasionally or talk on the phone. Not too problematic. But spend a holiday with them.

Vacations are the end of many friendships. Why is that? Because the longer you are together, the more likely it is that the ego and its dysfunctional way of interpreting other people and being in the world, its identification with mental positions, will come in.

And so, after a few days together with another person, you realize that this person has sides that you had not known about. There are aspects to that person that, wow, I never knew he was like that. You might get a taste of their pain body.

And that's interesting. And they, of course, think the same of you. I had an interesting...

When I was living in England, I lived in a little cottage in the country for a few years, and since my income was very low, I rented out two bedrooms, usually two people who were there for a while. In that town, there were many people transient passing through. So in a period of three years, I probably had about 12 people or so coming as lodgers.

And with 10 out of the 12, there were serious forms of dysfunction that only came out after a few weeks or a few days in some... Or after one day with one person. And two people were free of that.

I had two out of 12 people. 10 people actually, by dysfunction, I mean not just some quirk of behavior or something, but causing themselves and others considerable and unnecessary suffering, causing suffering for themselves and others. That is what I mean by dysfunction.

So whether it be deep mood swings, some obsessive preoccupations with non-existent problems, needing to talk to me for five hours a day. Two people did not manifest it. That was beautiful to experience.

And the others were also interesting to experience. I was just there as a listening presence, listening to what they had to say and watching and being there. And one or two also experienced a shift, a certain shift in consciousness.

Interesting observation to be with people live so closely together and see how some people go through enormous shifts in mood and inner states. So much that you don't know when they come down from the upper floor from the bedroom. You don't know who is coming down the stairs for breakfast because you don't know what state of consciousness they are in.

It could be dreadful. They could be aggressive and shouting and all. It could be in a state of chaos.

Everything is fine. Close friends, family members, and so on. Here also becomes more important even to be, are you able to be there not as a reactive entity?

Especially relationships that have a lot of past in them. The more past there is in the relationship, and that for example applies to your parents, relationship with your parents, your grown-up children, relationships with relatives you've known your whole life. A lot of past means there's usually a lot of patterns have accumulated in the relationships.

The patterns play themselves out whenever you come together. And in some relationships when you visit your parents, when you visit those relatives, you can almost play the record or a CD of what happened last time you saw them. The same kind of comments, the same kind of irritations, provoking the same reaction in you, the same, the same responses, the same, just play the record.

You don't even need to see them. You can say, I'm not coming to us to the Thanksgiving dinner. I'm just listening to last year's conversation.

So if, but if you go there in a state of alertness and presence and then suddenly you see your father, your uncle talking to you and making the same kind of comment, disapproving of your lifestyle, for example, or whatever it may be, or showing irritation with what you're, who you are, and then you can be there as a, as a, this requires more alertness, more intensity of alertness than with the person selling you a newspaper. So it's, start with a newspaper person and wait a little and, and be in your room, do it with flowers, be present with a flower.

The flower almost asks you to be present with it. It says, please recognize my beauty because I recognize my own beauty through you. It's asking you, it wants to be recognized and seen.

It's, it's, if a flower can't do it, then what can? Well, maybe your dog can. All those are easier ways of being, of sustaining that state of alert presence, spacious presence in the

face of another being.

And then finally say, okay, I'm ready now to visit my parents or I'm ready to see my grown up children. And then you go and then they start acting out the same. The important thing is that you are no longer run by your mind.

You are there as a presence. Hang on to your inner body. I recommend that highly.

By that I mean, have some attention in the inner energy field of the body as you listen to your child or your parent while they talk, ask you questions and also be rooted in here. Feel the aliveness throughout the energy field. And while you listen to your, whoever it is, your uncle, dad, grandfather, and they talk and then you give an answer out of, let it come out of that moment that's brief, the stillness, alertness.

Can you, and while you meet them, can you be free of thought in the moment of giving them a hug, if that's what they do? And be there. And then observe that that's not who they are.

The irritated comments they make about you, the accusations, perhaps they're keeping the past alive that they share with you in their minds. Well, you did that five years, 10 years ago, 20 years ago. Do you remember what you did?

I'll never forget that. Yes, I did. You're right.

Or if they may not be right at all, they might be wrong. And then you say, is that what I did? There's no need to say, I never did that.

I never said that. Yes, you said that. No, I didn't.

And immediately you're trapped in mind against mind, mental position against mental position. But all you need to say that is, I did. Is that how you remember it?

Or say nothing at all, even better. Oh, well, okay. Now, the amazing thing is, if you do not fight another person's mental position, it weakens.

So you're doing something wonderful for them. You are not strengthening their mental positions. Mental position means I'm identifying with a certain thought form.

And that's what I derive my sense of I. The sense of I is lodged in the thought form. So that's this identification with a mental position.

And if nobody resists it, it thrives on resistance. It thrives on opposition. Without opposition, the egoic mind form becomes weakened.

If nobody contradicts, what's going to happen? And they'll make another attempt to get some kind of contradiction. And again, they simply, oh, well, okay.

And it gets weaker and weaker. It's quite upsetting for that person. But you're doing something wonderful.

You're actually, there's an opportunity now for the mental position to dissolve. And sometimes this happens when you are able to be there as spacious presence. And this is close to a miracle.

But the important thing is, you are not doing it in order to change them. If you're doing it in order to change them, you're not there. There is a second motive, a hidden motive, and it's your mind coming in.

You're not really present. Or if you have, again, a little danger I need to point out, the mind may use the arising of this new consciousness and make a conceptual self out of it. And then you have a new self image, a concept of who you are as somebody who is superior to most of these people, like your relatives.

And so, and that can be confused with the state of presence. So then you go to the gathering of your family or relatives with that unconscious mental image of yourself as a superior spiritually advanced being. And you will notice that sooner or later, because then you will get irritated because they are so unadvanced.

And if you make a little comment to them that you will understand where I'm at when you are more conscious. So the mind is very cunning. It can use even presence and make it into a concept.

Of course, then you've lost presence. But I have seen people who think they are present without realizing that they've made presence into a concept. Presence means just the simplicity of inner space, not identified with content, neither the content of your mind, nor the content of somebody else's mind.

Be there as the space for the content, the content, external content, inner content. Don't be one with the content. Don't have your entire life run by content.

Be the space, be the space. That's the practice. And the more past there is, the more alertness is required.

As I said, Ram Dass, you remember what he said? If you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents. That's the test.

Or other relatives. Or your ex-husband or your wife. If you have children still, I'm now talking about children rather than grown-up children, if there's such a thing.

Your relationship with your child, let's say your actual child. What is it that you transmit to the child? What is the state of consciousness that gets transmitted?

What is your habitual state of consciousness? That is what you teach the child, not what

you tell the child. Your habitual state of consciousness.

Is your life one damn thing after another? Is that how your family lives at home, as many modern families do? What's the next thing we have to do?

Next thing. We're always hurrying to the next moment. You haven't done your homework yet.

Come on. What do you have to do? Go do this.

Do that. Continuous restlessness in the energy field. Of course you have to do things.

Yes, nobody's saying don't do anything. We're talking about whether you are lost in a continuous succession of doing and thinking and doing. When your child comes, first question, are you able to listen when the child speaks?

Listen means, true listening means you're there as a spacious presence. What the child is saying isn't so important. Are you giving your child space?

That is the question. Are you there as space? Not if you can't do it the whole day, it's fine, but occasionally when you interact.

Is the only time you interact with your child when you want your child to do something? Or when you have something to say about or stopping the child, don't do that. Is that the only interactions you have and you think you're responsible because you do all the right things?

You tell your child all the right things to do and not to do. You're a responsible parent. Well, not really, because the most vital dimension is missing.

The transcendent, the being. The consciousness, that which is beyond the personalized dimension. That's missing.

Life is missing. And your life is consumed by your life situation. And you're missing life.

Life is now. Life is beyond the content of your life. The content of your life, whatever happens in your life, the experiences, the events, that's all life situation.

But are you acknowledging life in the midst of your life situation? Or is your life, which includes your family life, is your life consumed by your life situation? By all the things that need doing, that need thinking about, that need one thing after another.

The life situation, past, future. What do we have to do next? Always, vital thing for any, not just relationships, for any sane life is find the life in your life situation.

And their life is not the forms of life, because the forms of life are always part of the life situation. I'm talking about the life prior to form that is the space of consciousness, of

stillness. That is life.

That is eternal life, timeless. And that needs to be there. And then otherwise, the world is going to eat you alive.

It's going to eat you up. That's what it does. If you don't get your attention, your consciousness into the, find the space.

The world, your life situation, which is the world, is going to consume you, all your attention continuously. Every situation says, give me your attention, I matter. Attention, please, attention.

Every thought says, I matter, give me your attention. Every thought wants to proliferate into other thoughts. An insane way to live, but normal.

It's called normal. So the vital thing, where is the life in my life situation? And if you find the life, which is in the now, now is the entry point into life.

Okay, let's imagine then every one of you has a life situation as I have. Some of you have a life situation that is perhaps pretty bad, considered from the point of view of the mind. Many things have just gone wrong.

And a few more things are likely to go wrong, says the mind. Or you have a heavy burden of things that have not been solved in your life. Of course you have.

That's the life, your life situation. But if you are here and carry that with you, then you wouldn't really be here. So if you're here carrying your life situation with you, you would, your thoughts would continuously drift to your problems and what you have to do, what you fail to do, what has happened to you, what might happen to you.

And you would only occasionally hear a few words, a little, catch a few words, catch what, present moment. Okay. Space, consciousness.

Okay. But you're going with, you're here, you have your past and your future going, carrying that. Okay, where's the life now?

Here. Your life is the consciousness. Consciousness, space, whatever you want to call it, allowed stillness.

That is the fullness, the full emptiness, the unmanifested. Have a little space in the midst of your life situation, just a little, a little space opens up. I'll just do it here.

Just this, just this. That's alert, present. And suddenly you feel, ah, this moment is actually okay.

This moment, life now, because you're getting deeper into this moment, you're not just

seeing the surface of this moment. You're getting into the essence of the space. This moment is the space for what happens.

This moment is actually okay. And you can have that test at any stage, when you feel the burden of your life situation, see, if your mind tells you your life is very problematic and chaotic or bad, then you find out if that applies to this moment. And then you find, well, this moment is actually not that bad at all.

And the deeper you go into this moment, the more life you feel, present, clear. Where's your life situation? It's not there unless you remember it.

Oh yes. And then attention back. That's where anything new comes from.

Otherwise, your life situation will just, one thing will lead to, there will be no true change. One damn thing will lead to another damn thing, and another damn thing, and another problem. And when you solve that problem, two new problems raise their head out of that solution.

That's karma in Eastern terms. One thing leads to another. Action, reaction, action, reaction, action, reaction, no space, no freedom.

But if you find the life, as much as possible, make space. And then that space even affects the externals. If not immediately, sometimes immediately, you will find changes taking place in the so-called life situation, because you have gone into that place out of which all life arises, anything that's new.

If you don't touch that in yourself, all you ever experience is a repetition of the old in your life. Sometimes it pretends to be new, it looks new on the surface, and you go into another relationship and say, now finally I've found, but you haven't accessed the unconditioned in yourself, and you find, oh god, it's turning into the same, my marriage is turning into the same marriage as my last one. Oh my god.

So we're all, we're at the, we're getting to the essence of this now, which you will need in your close intimate relationships. It is vital that you are there as space, as much as possible, that you're able to listen and be the space, because that's where true listening arises, to your partner, listen, be aware of the mind and its positions. Remember President Obama's spiritual advice, he says, if you disagree, you don't need to be disagreeable.

That sounds simple, but it's actually quite profound, because he's saying you don't need to be identified with your mental positions. You can still have mental positions and opinions, and as the Zen master said, you don't need to seek the truth, just stop cherishing opinions, and the truth emerges. What does that mean?

Stop cherishing opinions. Opinions are the mind, they are positions of the mind, of

rightness, this is how it is, and you identify with the positions. That causes endless conflict, because the other person does the same, two mental positions fighting and strengthening each other.

So you don't need to be disagreeable when you disagree, means you don't need to be identified with mental positions, and how are you not identified with mental positions? How do you do that? By realizing that you, who you are is not the arising thoughts, who you are is the space behind your thoughts, and you come, you are, you are, that's who, that's, you are the space for your thoughts, you're not your thoughts.

Then you're not identified with the positions of the mind, and that means you're then not, if you're identified, you defend your mental positions as if you were defending your life. That's the, that's the absurdity. People, some people even get into physical fights, they start arguing, sometimes it's family members, you read these articles in the paper, two brothers, or father and son, they started discussing something about sports or politics, and then one person took a knife and killed the other one.

It happens for, what happened? They were defending, they were so identified with their mental positions that when the mental position was attacked or questioned, it was unconsciously considered an attack on their very life. And that is how you can observe it in others, and preferably in yourself, when you become emotional, when your discussions start, and you're defending your viewpoint, you're, you're defending your position of rightness, and you're feeling, you're getting upset.

It could even be something spiritual, and you're saying, the now is all there is, I'm telling you. Why do you never believe me? It requires, you can see it more easily in others, and then requires a little bit more alertness to see it in yourself.

But a good sign is getting upset when you start discussing something. Oh, I'm lost in a mental position. I've lost the space of now.

And then there's an opportunity to return. Then you can listen, you can talk about something. Listening, perhaps, is the greatest thing you can do for your partner.

And it's not so much what the partner says that has its place and importance, but to be there and connect on the level of awareness. And should you, listening implies that there is an open space. The words are received in that open space.

Partners evolve sometimes at different speed, the evolution of consciousness, and some may not evolve for a while at all. So it's possible that suddenly the awakened consciousness comes into you, into you, and your partner remains where he or she is. And you go into enormous presence, and aliveness, and newness, and you still see he or she is still no change.

And then wait a little, and see it is quite possible that your state transmits itself, even

the slightest degree of readiness in the other. The fact that you do not strengthen his or her mind anymore by opposing his or her mind, the vital thing, don't oppose the mind. You can express your viewpoint without opposition.

Something may happen, an opening may happen. Or it is possible that you may have to separate, and it may be that the other partner will leave you, because it is no longer satisfying to live with you without the drama. The pain body, of course, many of you know about the pain body, and hopefully not only know about the pain body, but have direct knowledge, immediate knowledge of your own pain body.

The pain body, of course, is the favorite place for the pain body, which is the old accumulated pain, which is an energetic, almost an entity that lives in you, that lives on emotional suffering. It loves its vibrational frequency. It thrives on relations, close relationships.

That's where it gets its food, most of its food. There isn't much you can do with, if your pain body needs food, it can't do much when you go to the supermarket and only see the cashier for half a minute or one minute. Even there it could happen.

I've been standing here for 10 minutes and you've been talking to this customer instead of serving me. But favorite place for pain bodies to renew themselves are families and intimate relationships. That's their place.

And so you will know your partner has a pain body which occasionally takes them over and makes them say and do things that one could say they're completely out of character. Well, yes, it's unconscious. It comes as a surprise when you've started living with a person and you've experienced their pain body after perhaps two or three weeks for the first time.

And that used to be the big surprise when people got married. Nowadays often people live together for a while before they get married so they already know that the other has a pain body. It's good.

And you haven't committed yourself yet. You can still get out. But what a dreadful thing when you have to, when you marry somebody, start living with that person and two or three weeks after the honeymoon a totally different person is suddenly there.

A person who's in a deeply negative energy field, says hurtful things, misinterprets what you do. You say, who did I marry? And you think this must be the real person.

Maybe I married, this was all a disguise. The real person is coming out now. That's of course not the case.

It's not the real person, it's the pain body. And where's yours? Oh.

Your partner's pain body wants yours, wants your emotional reaction. Pain body is an emotional aspect of ego. It's part of the egoic consciousness.

Pain body needs to be recognized in yourself and the other as it arises. It's not usually there all the time, that would be dreadful, but it comes periodically. And then you go back to normal for a while and then it comes back.

And so you need to recognize it, be there as the space for it, be the presence in the other and in yourself. Perhaps the most destructive thing in relationships is the pain body that people carry around with them, that takes them over and makes them, even sometimes people who are already awakening, they still get periodically get taken over by their pain body and completely lose consciousness and then completely identified with that energy field. It uses their mind.

It rises up when the pain body needs to renew itself, feed on somebody else's reaction, it moves into your mind and every thought you think is the thought of the pain body. It completely, the emotional energy field takes possession of your mind, which is probably, if you're not conscious, is probably problematic enough as it is even without the pain body. But then the pain body rises into your mind and then if you observe it in your partner, because if it happens to you, you can't observe it anymore, the presence is lost, but you can observe it in another more easily.

Every word they say to you is the pain body speaking through them as if an entity, and in a way it is like that, has taken possession of them and is now using their mind and speaking through their mind. You need to know that so that you do not react as if that were who they are. So that is where a degree of compassion comes in when you recognize that they are being possessed at that moment by this entity called pain body.

That helps to know it, but this entity is very cunning and knows exactly how to get an emotional reaction from you. It will accuse you, blame you, mention, it knows your weakest points and it will go in there and press all the right buttons until you finally go, and your own pain body has awakened and you're in the grip of it and you start shouting and whatever form the pain body takes. Or you may be present enough and so that you don't get taken over by your own pain body.

But even being in the grip of the pain body, if you're awakening, if the new consciousness is arising, there is a good chance that at the back there is still an observing presence and you are able to say to your partner, I think my pain body has just come up. I can feel it. There it is.

And if your partner's pain body has not come up yet, then he or she can help you to stay present with it. You can address it, see it. It happened just at this moment when you said that or that happened, that and now I can feel it.

Okay, let's stay with it. You may also point out to your partner that the pain body has come up when you observe it. And if you're lucky, there's still enough awareness there to recognize it.

But the pain body is very cunning. It may even be that your own pain body is coming up and you're accusing your partner that their pain body is there. Whoa, very cunning.

And of course, the interesting thing is if somebody says to you, there's your pain body. If there's a reaction, then he or she was right. What do you mean my pain body?

If there is an open looking, you say, that's my pain body. Okay. Okay, let me just feel into this.

Then probably wasn't. My pain body. Well, that's strange.

Didn't feel like a pain body, but maybe. Space, space, space. Is there space in this relationship with your child, with your partner, with your relative, with a newspaper person, with anybody?

Is there space? That is a vital question. So relationships is where your degree of presence is being challenged.

And it's your opportunity for the deepening of presence and intensification of presence, because you will need it in relationships. The hermit doesn't need that intensification of presence. The hermit is not being challenged by the human mind in others.

Maybe challenged by his or her own mind. That's maybe big enough as an obstacle for some, but being challenged by other human minds around you, that is the challenge. So your relationship, the degree of conflict or absence of conflict in relationships is a reflector that tells you where you are at as far as the arising consciousness is concerned.

Otherwise you could fool yourself so easily. So there, see what is the quality and depth of relationships? The quality and the depth, that's the same thing really.

Is there a depth in it? That's what I mean by what space is. Space is the dimension of depth.

Without space, inner space, all you have is the horizontal dimension of life. Which is past and future and the stream of thinking. That's the horizontal dimension.

Most people on this planet still move exclusively in the horizontal dimension of life. Their life has no depths. Their relationships have no depths.

They have a pseudo-depth. When the ego falls in love with someone, it looks and feels very deep, but it isn't really. It is an intense clinging, a wanting to take possession of, saying to the other, be with me, I need you.

Play the part that I have assigned to you and I play the part that you want me to play. And that looks deep for a while. When you are in love, you feel, wow, it looks so intense.

You can observe people that I have only met recently, how they look at each other with that intensity that says, you are so special and I will play the role that you want me to play. You play the role that I want you to play. And then they sit in the restaurant looking at each other.

It's a role. It's clearly a role that you play, but it looks good on film. And everybody's doing it.

You can see it in the movies. And then one year passes and then that stage is over. And then they just sit there in the restaurant.

Horizontal dimension and the vertical dimension. The vertical dimension is the dimension of depth, which has nothing to do with the content of your life, which exists in the past and the future, but ultimately only in the mind, because that's where past and future are. Find the vertical dimension of depth in your life.

Find the life underneath your life situation. No matter how burdensome or problematic your life situation seems to be, and particularly there in difficult life situations, the more difficult and burdensome your life situation is, the more vital, the more important it is to find the vertical dimension, the life underneath your life situation, which you can only find by accessing the power of the present moment within. A refusal to dwell mentally on past and future.

As much as possible, bring attention to this, the depths of now. Not just the surface of now, which is what's happening, but the space in which all this is happening. That's the consciousness that's here.

So the depths of this moment, the surface of this moment is this room, the voice, all your sense perceptions, whatever you feel, any thoughts that come into your head, they are all part of the content of now, the surface dimension. And the surface dimension is happening where? In you.

This entire room, the people in this room, is happening in you. Where else? Philosophers have even questioned whether, what the correspondence is between external reality and the inner.

They have questioned if there even is such a thing as an external reality, and some have considered that we are all engaged in a dream. So you need to consider the possibility that you are dreaming this room. You need to consider the possibility that you are dreaming this voice, talking in your dream.

Have you had a character ever in your dream that says to you, maybe this is a dream?

I'm not saying this is a dream, but I'd like you to consider the possibility that it is a little bit like a dream, because just as a dream, very soon this situation evaporates, dissolves. And then you look back tomorrow and you say, there was this room and there was a man talking about the now.

Was that a dream? Or perhaps for a moment after you wake up, you can't remember whether it was a dream or did it happen. Not that much different, because this, every situation dissolves just like a dream.

And so some people will tell you, yes, it is like a dream, and yes, it is, but even if it is a dream, you can still find the reality that underlies the dream. Because even a dream could not be if there were not the space of consciousness in which the dream appears. Otherwise it wouldn't be.

For it to be, there needs to be a field or space of consciousness. And in that light of consciousness, the dream appears. Otherwise there would be no dream.

So at the bottom of the dream, there must be something that is not, that is real. Even if everything else is unreal. And in some ways it is, compared to the absolute reality of that which underlies this impermanent world of form.

Compared to the absolute reality, compared to the absolute reality, yes, the whole thing that we experience here is a dream-like thing. And that's fine. But where is the reality?

The reality is that which makes the dream possible. The light of consciousness in which it appears. And where is that?

It's you. So you are not the form of you. You are not the name, or your job, or your past history, or your future, or this or that.

You're not the person. Ultimately, the person is part of that dream-like thing. Go to a cemetery and look at the gravestones.

They were all persons. And they've dissolved. If you go to an old cemetery, nobody even remembers who these people were.

They're just names. They've dissolved long ago. Dissolved.

Even that maybe the last people who remembered them were their grandchildren, and then they died long ago. And so it all evaporates very quickly. And yet, what is the reality behind all that?

You are the reality behind that. Not the temporal appearance of the person, but the consciousness in which all this happens. And that consciousness is timeless.

The now is always the now. Never not now. And you go this next morning, tomorrow

morning, the same now, the same space, something different appears.

So there's dwell there rather than lose yourself in that. And then the world of form is actually quite an interesting place. No longer a veil of tears.

It's a veil of tears if there's nothing else. If you don't know the reality that underlies it, then it becomes suffering. You lose yourself in the character that you play in this life.

And you lose yourself totally in it. And then you believe all the other characters you meet are absolutely real. Don't realize that their reality is only relative.

They have a relative reality just as your character. I'm talking character in the sense of somebody in a play. And so we see the absolute, and then we can deal with the relative with much greater ease.

We are not lost in the relative. We are not lost in the surface world, in the world of form, not lost in time, the world of past and future, not lost in the continuous stream of thinking, which is all the same thing. Just all that's needed is for you to become acquainted with the dimension of depths, and then realize that's your home.

That's who you are. And you can't define it in any way. There's no definition that you could find for who you are.

There is a not knowing in that from the point of view of the mind, and yet anything you need to know will come out of that. Anything that you truly need, not just need to know, also anything that you truly need comes out of that. Seek only that.

All else will be given unto you. It changes even the externals. Seek that and not just seek it, be it.

Realize you are it, not a person, and then play with the person. The kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed, he said 2,000 years ago. And when he used that kingdom of heaven, he pointed to us.

So if it's not with signs to be observed, means it's not outside. Oh, there, there, there. It is within.

It is your innermost reality.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:28 - 1:52:41)

Thank you. Audible hopes you have enjoyed this program.